

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

May 22, 2001

LB 593

the people pulled over for routine traffic stops. This information would then be turned over to the Nebraska Crime Commission and would include the number of stops, the race, the ethnicity of the person stopped, the nature of the alleged violation and whether a warning or citation was issued. It further requires law enforcement agencies to develop a system for receiving complaints which would then be forwarded to the Crime Commission. The Crime Commission would then issue a report to the Governor and to the Legislature. The problem is that regardless of whether there is racial profiling in Nebraska or not, there is the perception of unfairness. Because of that perception many people who are stopped for legitimate reasons may think they're being targeted because of their race. There was a Gallup study that was released in 1999 that showed that 60 percent of people in the United States believe that police use racial profiling to stop people, and 80 percent of those people believe that it shouldn't happen. We need to address this perception, we need to collect data and determine whether racial profiling does exist in the state, but maybe more importantly we need to remove the perception of unfairness. There are no penalties provided in this bill, the purpose of the bill is not to change practices per se, but to collect information and to give us a chance to determine if Nebraska has a problem, and we need to start somewhere. There are some people who say that this bill doesn't go far enough. The ACLU on one side, there are others who think we don't need this type of legislation, some police unions. I believe we need to start somewhere so that Nebraskans all know that they're being treated fairly by all of us in the state. I want to especially thank the Nebraska State Patrol and the Fraternal Order of Police for their help in crafting this legislation. Last October the Governor and the State Patrol and a lot of law enforcement agencies from across the state put in place a resolution against racial profiling. This is the next step, this is our response to that. I support the committee amendments that change the bill and allow law enforcement to have a little more leeway, but don't change the impact of the bill. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Connealy. There are committee amendments, and Senator Brashear, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, you're recognized to open on them.